

***Rep. Vern Buchanan (FL-13)***

On September 11, 2001, we experienced the worst terrorist attack in our nation's history. America's response was swift, unified and inspiring.

We will never forget the 3,000 innocent men, women, and children who perished that day including the brave emergency responders who rushed into the destruction and risked their own lives to help others.

The worst day in our nation's history also brought out the best in the American spirit as first responders from across the country joined in recovery efforts, countless Americans gave blood and donated time and money to charitable causes, and men and women from all walks of life volunteered for military service to defend their nation.

Ten years later, September 11th remains a day of remembrance and reflection. It also serves as a stark reminder to our enemies that America will never shrink from upholding our bedrock principles of freedom and democracy. Americans have demonstrated that we are capable of coming together as a nation to face any threat that jeopardizes our way of life.

The fight against radical terrorism is an ongoing battle that we can and must win in order to preserve freedom for future generations of Americans.

Since that fateful day, the changes we've made to protect our homeland from attacks have made us stronger. The constant vigilance and brave work of our armed forces and intelligence community have kept our country safe. Yet we must not take this for granted.

Incidents like the failed "underwear bomber" of Northwest Airlines Flight 253 in 2009 and the car-bombing attempt at Times Square last year remind us that our enemies have not given up. We must remain vigilant in protecting our citizens without sacrificing the values that make us the greatest nation in the world.

That means prosecuting terrorists in military tribunals, not civilian courts. As the author of the "Military Tribunals for Terrorists Act," I believe terrorists should be treated as enemy combatants, not common criminals.

We must also be more selective about where we send foreign aid. Foreign assistance is

sometimes necessary when trying to root out terrorism, such as in terrorist haven Yemen. Other countries might not be so deserving of our assistance, such as Pakistan, which received \$13 billion in U.S. aid over the last ten years, yet missed Osama bin Laden hiding almost in plain sight.

When terrorists struck our nation, they failed to realize that the American spirit does not crumble in the face of oppression; our nation was forged under the yoke of tyranny. September 11<sup>th</sup> is now a day that brings Americans together and gives us strength.

While it seems like there is endless disagreement in Washington these days over issues big and small, the lesson of 9/11 is that America's spirit and resolve remain as strong as ever.